

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, December 13, 1990

Published Since 1877

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE
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Nashville, Tennessee



Gifts for the King

By Ron Kirkland

And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh (Matthew 2:11).

God created in man certain spiritual needs that are more basic to humanity than even our physical survival instincts. Even among those who do not consider themselves to be religious, these needs are manifested in such things as the importance of friendships and the need for relationships and love.

All humans are created in God's image and all of us have spiritual needs. These needs are often expressed in the Scripture as simple statements of fact such as Acts 20:35 which says that it is more blessed to give than to receive. This statement is not a command or suggestion; it is a fact of life. Man has a universal need of the blessing that he can receive only by giving. God made us in his own image and a higher nature like his own, and we really are more content and satisfied (blessed) when we give than when we receive. God knows that about himself, and, because he loves us, he lets us get in on the blessing. Blessed giving is a simple reality of life. People who give are happier than people who receive. Givers get more out of life than getters get!

There is a wonderful lesson on blessed giving in the story of the Magi. The Magi undoubtedly did not know Joseph's family, so Mary and Joseph were not expecting a gift for the child. There is no indication that the Magi expected anything in return for their treasure. The wise men were not returning favors, exchanging valuables, or offering a reward; they were not trying to influence future actions. They were giving gifts in the only true sense of the word. That is the kind of giving that brings God's blessing.

Most of what we do that we call giving is really trading or bargaining. We offer rewards for good behavior or favors, or we repay "debts" of gratitude. Often what we call a gift is really given with some return in mind. There is nothing inherently wrong with these kinds of exchanges, but we should never confuse this with blessed giving.

There are four progressive steps to blessed giving revealed in the story of the Magi. Each step leads naturally to the next: (1) they saw the Child, (2) they worshiped him, (3) they opened their treasures, and (4) they offered him gifts.

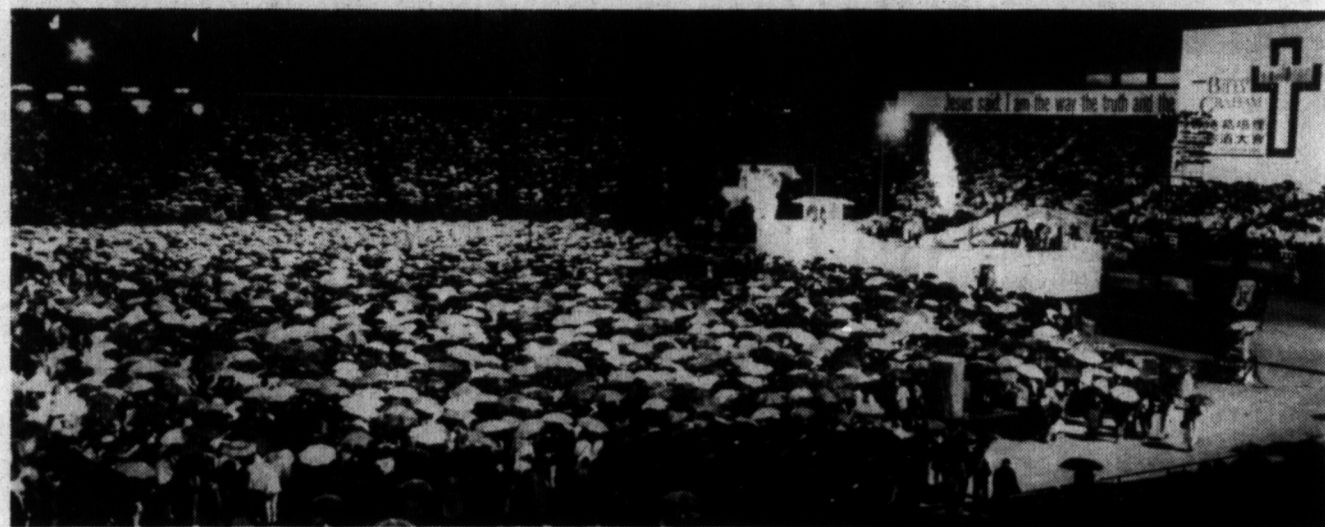
The process of blessed giving does not begin with inherent generosity; it begins when a person beholds the glory of the Lord. Seeing the Lord in his glory causes a spontaneous desire to worship him. Worship requires that we open our treasures. Any other attitude about your treasure before God is not worship. When our treasures are open before God, they can be joyfully given without grudging. The Magi left the stable with less gold, frankincense, and myrrh in their own possession, but they left with blessings that could never be lost and with joy that money could never buy.

As we open our hearts and lives to God in worship, our treasury, which is where Jesus said our hearts are located, also opens to him. From open hearts and open treasure, blessed gifts naturally flow. Blessed gifts are not repayments of past favors; gifts are not exchanges made with others who will return something to you. Real gifts are free and spontaneous offerings whose reward is the blessing that comes in the giving itself. Be a "BLESS-ED GIVER" this Christmas.

Kirkland is pastor, First Church, Amory.



Kirkland



Top: Hong Kong Government Stadium; Left: Mission World Circuit City; Right: Billy Graham.

Graham broadcasts reach 100 million

HONG KONG, Nov. 19 — Evangelist Billy Graham's largest crusade in his 40 years of ministry originated from Hong Kong's Government Stadium and was extended by Mission World via satellite and video to more than 30 countries across Asia and the Pacific in 48 languages, to an estimated audience of 100 million people per night.

Some 25 million attended 70,000 satellite and video crusades, each prepared as if Mr. Graham were coming personally. More than 125,000 churches participated in this outreach, training over 400,000 counselors.

The five-day Hong Kong Billy Graham Crusade, Nov.

14-18, overflowed the 29,000-seat stadium at each meeting even though three of the meetings were held in a constant downpour. On the final day, 43,000 people filled the stadium and an additional 60,000 gathered at two nearby soccer fields to watch on a large video wall.

Mission World — a series of regional efforts worldwide responding to opportunities to present the Gospel — is a ministry of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. This outreach began in Africa in 1989 and will continue in November, 1991, in Central and South America.

Pastors find common cause in house for fired ministers

CARTERSVILLE, Ga. (BP) — Two pastors with opposing views of the Southern Baptist Convention controversy have found a common cause in assisting fired ministers.

"We're on totally opposite ends of the SBC conflict, but we both have a heart for fellow ministers," says John Yarbrough, pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church in Cartersville, Ga.

Yarbrough, a self-defined conservative, and Jim Strickland have established a home for terminated church staff members. Strickland is pastor of Cartersville's Heritage Baptist Church, which ordains women deacons and uses a liturgical approach in worship.

"I can't think of two more diverse preachers and congregations," Yarbrough says. "But on some things we can celebrate and work together."

"When people are hurting or in trouble, our differences are less important," Strickland adds.

A 1988 SURVEY, conducted by the church administration department of the Baptist Sunday School Board, of directors of missions showed that 116 pastors are terminated every month in the SBC. Norris Smith, consultant, notes that the statistic does not include people in other church staff positions.

The Cartersville home is a three-bedroom house occupied by one family at a time. Smith does not know of any other homes dedicated to helping fired ministers, but he and Yarbrough would like to establish a network of homes so they could refer ministers to other locations while their house is occupied.

The Cartersville house is named for Thomas J. Holmes, the late Georgia pastor who was fired from Tattnell Square Baptist Church in Macon in the early 1960s. Holmes had fought for the right of a Nigerian student to attend the church.

Ironically, the first residents of the Holmes House were fired for similar reasons. Bob and Wynette Hoggard, who currently live in the house, were dismissed in June after serving a church in coastal Georgia for 16 years. He was pastor and she was music minister.

"We were told we were fired because I baptized foreigners," Hoggard says. The church had a Vietnamese mission, and people representing as many as 10 ethnic groups regularly attended the church's worship service.

Hoggard points out that their termination does not reflect the thinking of the entire church or the most actively involved members. But the action does characterize the group which attended the Wednesday night business meeting when the couple was fired.

The Holmes House is open to ministers regardless of the cause of



HOME AWAY FROM HOME — Bob and Wynette Hoggard have made their home in Cartersville, Ga., after being fired in June from a church in coastal Georgia. They are the first residents of the Thomas J. Holmes House, a house for church staff members forced to leave their jobs. (BP Photo by Sarah Zimmerman)

their termination. Strickland says the board of directors considered whether it should allow people who were fired for immoral actions to stay at the house.

"No matter who's at fault, there's hurt involved," Yarbrough says. "Even if the person warranted termination, he still needs a ministry to love and restoration and usefulness and away from bitterness."

As part of the restoration process,

residents are required to go to counseling sessions provided by the Georgia Baptist Convention.

To make the home financially feasible for unemployed ministers, residents are only required to pay the utility bills. The 12-member board of directors raises money for the \$1,200 monthly house payments. Strickland says the house, which was purchased in February, is financed for five years to save money on interest payments.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson



Influential pastors

All of us have cause for gratitude when we recall pastors who left their marks upon our lives. Two preachers had a tremendous impact upon my life in the early formative years.

The first was Dan Moulder. He lived at Lorena in Smith County, but was called the bishop of five counties. He pastored 42 churches, 16 of which he organized. He was at my grandfather's house when my mother was born, he married my parents, and preached at my father's funeral.

My people attended Goodwater Church until 1932 when the church at Lorena was organized. As best I can recall, we had services on the fourth Saturday morning and the fourth Sunday night of each month. From Bro. Dan I received the image of what a pastor should be. He once told a young preacher who complained of having nothing to preach, "Get your Bible

and go among your people. You will receive more than you'll ever be able to preach." He, along with those slat-bottomed pews, made a deep impression on my life.

Bro. Dan, 1867-1953, preached for 65 years and left a legend across central Mississippi that still bears fruit.

My pastor during high school at Forest was Barney Walker, Sr. He was a preacher's preacher, fearless in denouncing sin, and yet a gracious and loving pastor. He just believed it and believed that our life ought to show it. Bro. Barney was born and converted near Taylorsville. He won many people to faith in Christ and was tireless in preaching. Even when he was 87, he was still preaching in the Jackson area.

Bro. Barney died two years ago. At the funeral I sat near the back; and,

upon seeing all the preachers present, realized that he had touched many lives.

After I served several years in the Navy, God called me to preach. In the years that followed, there were some great men who encouraged me in the ministry. Time would fail me to tell of Reese Rogers, Covington County; W. A. Keel of Taylorsville; Bryan Abel, Collins; Leroy Green, Prentiss; and Joe Odle and O. B. Anderson on the Gulf Coast.

Dozens of others made significant contributions, but I think of these "Barnabases" when I count my blessings. Then I reflect on all the young preachers out there now. Who pastors them? Who will listen, encourage, and assist them today? The Dan Moulders and the Barney Walkers are still ministering; and, thank God, "His truth is marching on."

Guest opinion . . .

Most of all, grow up!!!

By Jehu Brabham

This past summer I was sitting in the bleachers watching my son play a youth baseball game. During the normal process of the game the umpire called "ball four" on a batter. Suddenly a coach ran from the dugout verbally abusing the umpire for calling ball four on the batter. It did not take long until coaches from both teams were on the field. Parents were soon standing and yelling. The young players on the field got mad and started throwing their gloves to the ground in anger. What started out as a wholesome, meaningful activity turned into a disgusting scene. I wanted to climb to the top of the bleachers and shout with my louder voice, would everyone please . . . SHUT UP! LISTEN UP! Most of all GROW UP!!!

Don't you think, amidst all the confusion, controversy, critical spirits, and rhetoric in our Southern Baptist Convention today that the vast majority of God-fearing Mississippi Baptists are ready to say to those who are fueling this divisive controversy, "Would you please SHUT UP! LISTEN UP! Most of all GROW UP!!!"

Do you recall when Peter, James, and John saw Jesus transfigured? They wanted to build tabernacles for Moses, Elias, and Jesus. Then a mighty voice thundered from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son; hear him." Now let me translate that into good old plain Mississippi language for you. God thundered, "Peter, James, John, listen up, fellows! The only thing important here is Jesus, the Savior of the world. FOLLOW HIM! Forget building those tabernacles. Get to talking about eternal life through Jesus Christ."

Doesn't it seem that sometimes we become like Peter, James, and John? We get so caught up in what we think

important that we begin to build tabernacles. We build tabernacles for the Bible, the Cooperative Program, convention boards, the Baptist Record, seminaries, alliances, forums, new conventions, and our own inflated egos. We get so busy that we don't have time for Jesus. God thunders from heaven to each of us in 1990 to SHUT UP! LISTEN UP! Most of all GROW UP! Follow Jesus. Feed my sheep. Go into all the world. The fields are white unto harvest, but where are the laborers?

Have you ever been called to an intensive care unit at a hospital? You slip quietly into the room and move close to the bed. You must bend over in order to barely hear the faint whisper-like voices of dying patients. The words from their lips are, "Help me? How can I be saved?" Do you think they want to hear a stirring discourse on theology? GROW UP! Do you think they want to hear about your strong defense regarding the inerrancy of the Bible? GROW UP! Do you think they are interested in what editorial appeared in the last issue of the Baptist Record? GROW UP! Do you think they want to hear your explanation of alternative funding formulas for mission giving? GROW UP! Do you think they want to hear about some gathering in a New Orleans cafe during the SBC? GROW UP! Do you think they want to hear about some immature adults saying "Shame! Shame!" GROW UP! Do you think they are interested in who might be elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention? GROW UP! Do you think they care whether you are liberal, conservative, moderate, a member of the forum, alliance, pastors' conference, or whatever? GROW UP!

The person standing at death's door is interested in one thing . . . salvation and eternal life through Jesus Christ. How in the world have we become so fault-finding, complaining, bitter, critical, and ungrateful Christians that we've gotten away from our first love, sharing a beautiful Savior with a lost and dying world? People all around us are dying and going to hell while we build tabernacles to the Bible, our convention, our denominational bureaucracy, etc. We've got time for everything except Jesus. God thunders from heaven, SHUT UP! LISTEN UP! Most of all, GROW UP!

There is little doubt in my mind that the overwhelming majority of Mississippi Baptists desire to follow the commands of Jesus Christ. Most have heard about all the rhetoric, critical complaining, bitter, and divisive remarks they care to hear. They hear and read every week about the alliance, forum, inerrancy, funding formulas, withholding "their" money, new conventions, resolutions, editorials, etc. The good-hearted, born again, Christ-following Mississippi Baptists are tired of all the tongue wagging and ready for people to stand up and proclaim JESUS. It's not inerrancy that saves you. It's JESUS. It's not the Cooperative Program that redeems you. It's JESUS. It's not the president of the SBC that we follow. It's JESUS. It's not the Bible that's our foundation. It's JESUS. It's not a new convention that will solve our differences. It's JESUS. It's not meeting or dialogue sessions that will heal our wounds. It's JESUS. It's time for people to SHUT UP. LISTEN UP. Most of all, GROW UP. We need . . . JESUS! JESUS! JESUS! JESUS!

(See GROW UP on page 8)

"YOU SAY THIS FIGHTING BETWEEN CHRISTIANS IS GIVING 'DOG-FIGHTS' A BAD NAME?"



Baptisms are up

Baptisms are up 9.7 percent over the previous year. Our churches baptized 16,135 this year. This is the largest number to be baptized since 1981.

These are more than just numbers. One was a 16-year-old high school student who came to know Christ through the witness of another student. Another was a young business executive. The manager of a service station introduced him to Jesus. Five of these were of the same family. Three of the children were saved during the Here's Hope Revival. Mom and Dad came to see them baptized and were saved. A young man bordering

on alcoholism came to scoff and remained to pray.

There were husbands saved bringing the family under the Lordship of Christ; wives were baptized and then leading their children to know the Lord. Altogether there were 16,135 individuals saved, each one with a thrilling story of God's grace.

All of this serves as a reminder of hundreds of others — neighbors, friends, family — without salvation. "... and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without ... 'someone to tell them?'"

Baptist Beliefs . . . Romans: introduction

By Herschel H. Hobbs

"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called . . . saints." — Romans 1:7a

For an indefinite time I invite you to join me in a study of selected passages from Romans. It is the most complete presentation of the gospel in the New Testament. Though he wrote under the power of the Holy Spirit, Paul was unaware that in this epistle he wrote one of the most important books ever penned.

Paul had never visited Rome. Most of the Christians there had not heard him preach. Since he planned to visit them on his way to Spain (15:24), he wrote to present the gospel as he preached it. The result is the most logical presentation of the gospel on record.

Paul wrote Romans from Corinth just before or after he wrote Galatians. The date was probably early spring of A.D. 57.

I call Galatians a "mini-Romans." Both deal with the same general sub-

ject, with Romans giving a more thorough treatment. In Galatians the apostle is refuting the teachings of the Judaizers (Gal. 1:6-9). They were Pharisaical Jews who had espoused Christianity (Acts 15:5). But they insisted that only Jews could be saved. Gentiles must become Jewish proselytes through circumcision, proselyte baptism, and living by the Mosaic law — then believe in Jesus for salvation. It was salvation by works plus faith. This denied salvation by grace through faith in Jesus, the gospel Paul preached.

It is not clear whether or not the Judaizers had reached Rome at this time. But Paul, nevertheless, wrote to fortify Roman Christians against them.

Neo-Judaizers are still with us preaching salvation by works through faith. So all the more we need to preach the gospel as presented in Romans.

Herschel Hobbs is pastor emeritus of First Church, Oklahoma City.

The Baptist Record

VOLUME 114

(ISSN-0005-5778)

NUMBER 44

Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$7.35 a year payable in advance. Second class postage paid at Jackson, Mississippi. The Baptist Record is a member of Southern Baptist Press Association.

Editor Guy Henderson
Associate Editor Anne McWilliams
Advertising Manager Evelyn Keyes
Editorial Associate Florence Larrimore
Circulation Manager Renee Walley
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Baptist Record Advisory Committee: Susan Kinton, Walnut Grove; Raymond Martin Jr., Jackson, vice-chairman; Billy Thames, Wesson; Randy Turner, Natchez; Tommy Tutor, Clarksdale; Randy Von Kanel, Hattiesburg; ex-officio, Evelyn Keyes, secretary, Jackson.

Postmaster: Send changes of address to The BAPTIST RECORD, P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205.

Send news, communications, and address changes to The Editor, Baptist Record P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205

Conference proposes new film rating boards

WASHINGTON (BP) — The establishment of public film-ratings boards in communities and states throughout the country has been proposed as a way to correct an industry-run movie ratings system that has received increasing criticism.

The recommendation was presented by the National Coalition on Television Violence, a TV and movie advocacy group, and Good News Communications, a Christian ministry that rates films, on Nov. 16 to the National Conference on Film Ratings, sponsored by the groups. A wide range of organizations were represented at the meeting, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, Women Against Pornography, the United States Catholic Conference, the National Council of Churches, the American Family Association, Focus on the Family and the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

The film-ratings conference was organized after the Motion Picture Association of America announced in September that it was replacing its X rating with a new NC-17 rating. Critics say the change enables movies to be featured in theaters that previously would not allow X-rated films and advertisements in newspapers that previously would not allow ads for X-rated films.

Advertising must include the board's rating and any symbols it attaches to the film. The symbols are: L (obscene language); S (sexual conduct); V, VV, VVV (increasing levels of violence); D (drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, portrayed positively); N (nudity); P (perversion), and A (adult situations).

"The local option is certainly one effective answer to what seems to be a

(See **FILMS** on page 8)

Baptist worker Graham is headed home for Christmas

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Southern Baptist worker Maurice Graham was heading home from Kuwait Dec. 10 to spend Christmas with his family.

"There's been a bunch of prayers and a big answer to them," said Dwight Graham of Winchester, Tenn., after receiving news that his younger brother's four-month ordeal in Iraqi-occupied Kuwait had ended. Maurice Graham's wife, Laurie, talked with him soon after his post-midnight arrival Dec. 10 in Frankfurt, Germany.

"He's tired, he's worn out," Dwight Graham said. "He's been under a tremendous strain." And he was recovering from the flu when he left Kuwait. "We know he's safe now. We're just waiting to see him."

After reunions with his wife and sons Peter, 13, and Aaron, 10, in Nashville, Maurice Graham likely will "pick the phone up and call Mom and Dad," J.V. and Ruby Graham in Shelbyville, Tenn., then get some rest, his brother speculated.

Officials hoped to arrange for Graham to finish his journey home Dec. 10, in time for his wife's birthday that day.

Graham joined some 175 Americans and 150 other Westerners on an Iraqi airliner that left Kuwait and Iraq Dec. 9 bound for Frankfurt.

Their exodus from Kuwait and Iraq came three days after Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's announcement that all foreign "guests" should be freed. Iraq's National Assembly added its formal approval Dec. 7 in a meeting on the Muslim Friday sabbath.

R. Keith Parks, Foreign Mission Board president, issued a special call to prayer Dec. 3 for the release of Graham and other foreign hostages, coupled with a letter-writing campaign to Saddam Hussein via the Iraqi Embassy in Washington. In November Parks urged Southern Baptist churches to make Dec. 9 a day

(See **GRAHAM** on page 5)

Texas Baptist board rejects release of funds to Baylor

DALLAS (BP) — The 193-member Baptist General Convention of Texas executive board narrowly voted down a motion to ask the BGCT Christian education coordinating board to release from escrow all convention scholarship funds allocated to Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

The motion by board member Clyde Herring, pastor of First Church, The Woodlands, Texas, drew considerable debate at the quarterly Dec. 4 board meeting in Dallas and was defeated by a margin that observers said was as close as a similar vote at the annual meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Texas in Houston, Nov. 13-14.

The Christian education coordinating board placed convention funds for Baylor in escrow after Baylor trustees Sept. 21 unilaterally changed the university charter to shift "sole governance" of the school from the 48 trustees elected by the BGCT to a 24-member board of regents.

At the Dec. 4 BGCT executive board

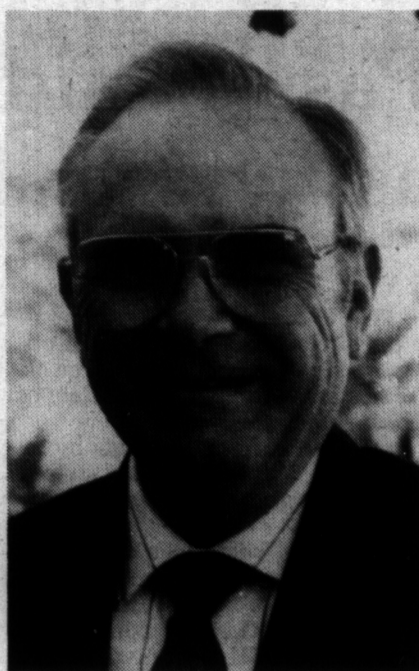
meeting, Herring asked that the board request the Christian education coordinating board to also release to Baylor nearly \$800,000 in "unfunded scholarships."

Dawson said these funds, given to the school for any scholarship need, were placed in escrow because they do not represent contracts with students as in the case of ministry scholarships.

After board member J.K. Minton of Houston said, "I think we should trust the process," the board narrowly voted down Herring's motion.

Robert E. Naylor, chairman of the 26-member Committee on BGCT/Baylor Relationship, released the names of a six-member subcommittee to meet with a six-member committee of Baylor trustees yet to be announced.

"Baylor administration and trustees are cooperative," he said, "but resolution of the matter will require God's intervention."



Dobbs

Dobbs will replace Vaughn

By Tim Nicholas

Eugene Dobbs, 58, of Philadelphia, was elected administrative assistant for ministry at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board by the board's Executive Committee.

Dobbs, pastor of First Church, Philadelphia, will replace the retiring Chester Vaughn, whose title was program director. The new title, to be assumed by Dobbs when he joins the staff Jan. 2, was part of a staff organization revamping requested by Executive Director Bill Causey, and approved by the committee.

Dobbs, pastor at Philadelphia since 1976, was earlier pastor at McLaurin Heights, Pearl, 1968-76; Calvary Church, Yazoo City, 1964-68; and Poplar Flat Church, Louisville, 1960-64.

A graduate of Mississippi College, Dobbs earned the master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from New Orleans Seminary.

Dobbs is a native of Choctaw County. He served in the U.S. Air Force and has been a trustee of William Carey College, a member of the MBCB Executive Committee, and is currently president of the convention board. He chaired the search committee which chose Bill Causey as executive director, MBCB. And he has been a volunteer with the Mississippi Baptist disaster relief team, serving as a ham radio operator.

Dobbs is married to the former Betty Gladney of Weir. They have two grown daughters.

The Second Front Page

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, December 13, 1990

Published Since 1877

MBCB Executive Committee approves staff reorganization

By Tim Nicholas

The Executive Committee meeting in Jackson last week approved a staff reorganization put forth by Executive Director Bill Causey, and elected Eugene Dobbs, pastor of First Church, Philadelphia, to fill a senior slot in that new staff structure.

Dobbs will join Jennings Orr as administrative assistant to Causey who said he wants the two to handle general administration of the MBCB activities.

Dobbs will take the title administrative assistant for ministry and will be in charge of the church program-related departments: Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries, Church Music, Discipleship Training, Sunday School, Brotherhood, Cooperative Missions, and Woman's Missionary Union.

Orr, who had the title director, business service division, will be called administrative assistant for business. He will have charge of accounting and personnel services, Communication, and Gulfshore Baptist Assembly. In addition, he operates the building maintenance and all finances of the MBCB operations.

Causey will continue direct supervision of the Baptist Record, Broadcast Services, Church/Minister Relations and Annuity, Stewardship and Cooperative Program Promotion, and Evangelism. He will take on Student Work from the program area, and operations of the BSU properties will be supervised by the business office.

In requesting the changes, Causey told the committee that he wanted to handle strategy, general planning and budgeting. He wanted his administrative assistants to do the general administration, project implementation, and performance evaluation. "I want them to assist me in getting the whole job done," said Causey. He said the two would see to the "day to day general administration" of the board.

In recommending Dobbs for the administrative assistant for ministry position, Causey said he decided "we need a pastor type" for the slot. He said the convention board and the Executive Committee "had affirmed Gene repeatedly" by electing him to leadership positions. He is currently president of the convention board.

In other business the Executive Committee approved purchase of a new truck for Central Hills and a new car for Causey. Low bid for the truck

was \$11,162.68 for a Chevrolet 1991 model, C-1500 Work Truck, V-6 engine, automatic transmission, AM radio, rear step bumper, and larger tires, from Turan-Foley Chevrolet in Gulfport. Low bid for a 1991 Ninety-Eight Oldsmobile for Causey was \$23,471.34 from Harry Vickery Chevrolet-Oldsmobile. Causey's 1989 Pontiac has a trade-in value of \$7,000, so the expenditure for the new car will

(See **STAFF** on page 5)



Executive Committee, MBCB, elected Tommy Tutor, center, pastor, Clarksdale, Oakhurst, as chairman; Ingram Foster, Prentiss, layman, left, as vice chairman; and P. J. Scott, right, pastor, First, Olive Branch, as secretary.

Causey undergoes heart surgery

Bill Causey, executive director, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, suffered a mild heart attack Tuesday, Dec. 5. A catheterization on Wednesday gave evidence of blockage in several arteries around the heart. Friday he underwent quadruple heart surgery at Baptist Medical Center in Jackson.

Latest report is he is rapidly recovering and the prognosis is that he will be back in his office in several weeks.

capsules

AMERICANS UNITED FOR SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE has announced strong opposition to a policy statement issued by the U.S. Catholic bishops that seeks taxpayer support for Catholic schools. The bishops, meeting Nov. 14 in Washington, D.C., approved a statement calling for broader public assistance to Catholic schools under the rubric of "parental choice." The statement also calls for the creation of national and local Catholic parents' groups to lobby lawmakers for government aid.

WINTER YOUTH CELEBRATIONS I and II, sponsored by the youth section of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board Discipleship Training department, are scheduled for Dec. 27-29, 1990, and Jan. 18-20, 1991, at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center. The board's discipleship training department also offers three winter weekend events for youths in 1991 at Ridgecrest. They are Winter Weekend I, Jan. 25-27; Winter Weekend II, Feb. 15-17; and Winter Weekend III, March 15-17. Registration information may be obtained by writing Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center, P. O. Box 128, Ridgecrest, N.C. 28770.

LEICESTER, ENGLAND (EP) — More than 4,500 Moslems have traveled recently, to Leicester, England, making religious pilgrimages to see an eggplant whose seeds spelled the name of Allah, discovered by Zahid Kassam. In March, an Asian in Nottingham found a similar eggplant.

ZONDERVAN RECYCLING CONSERVES OIL: Grand Rapids, Mich. — Not only is Zondervan publishing books about the Middle East oil crisis, the global communications company is also helping to save oil. Since May Zondervan has recycled 251,700 pounds of computer paper and corrugated cardboard. Between May 1 and October 1 this recycling effort has resulted in the conservation of 2,185 trees, 57,486 gallons of oil, and 1,552 cubic yards of land fill space.

TRUSTEES of New Orleans Seminary voted unanimously to elect Charles M. Lowry as director of the Center for Evangelism and Church Growth, effective Jan. 1, 1991, during the executive committee's recent quarterly meeting. As a resource center for pastors, professors, and students, the center is planned to be the first of its kind in the Southern Baptist Convention, holding the world's largest Southern Baptist collection of materials and books on church growth and evangelism.

NORWEGIAN PROTESTANTS send one missionary abroad for every 2,500 citizens of their nation (or 400 per 1 million citizens), researchers report, making Norway the leading per capita Protestant missionary — sending nation. Norwegians support 1,600 missionaries in 58 countries. Ireland tops Roman Catholic missionary — sending nations, with 3,200 missionaries per 1 million citizens.

A DOCUMENT CALLING FOR HOMOSEXUAL MINISTERS to remain celibate was approved by the Church Council of the Evangelical Church in America (ELCA) during its Oct. 19-22 meeting in Chicago, Ill.

The document says ordained ministers should uphold the doctrinal traditions of the church, witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and lead an exemplary life.

A section on sexual conduct says, "Ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual relationships." It also asserts that single ordained ministers are expected to be chaste and married clergy faithful to their spouses. Another section provides guidance for dealing with separation, divorce, and remarriage of the ordained.

"MIDDLE EAST TODAY," the Southern Baptist adult Foreign Mission Study for 1990, has sold out. "We're totally out in the warehouse and as far as I know most Baptist bookstores have sold out," said Charles Doggett of the Sunday School Board's Discipleship Training Department in Nashville, Tenn. The board printed nearly 50,000 copies of the study, written by Irma Duke of the Foreign Mission Board staff. It's the best-selling adult mission study since 1980, Doggett said. It also has given a boost to annual mission study participation in local churches, which has declined in recent years.

DHAHRAN, SAUDI ARABIA (EP) — AN ISLAMIC EXPERT hired by the U.S. military to teach troops in the Middle East about Islamic culture in Saudi Arabia has seen an unexpectedly high number of U.S. military personnel express an interest in converting to Islam.

At least 25 soldiers, including Catholics, Protestants, and others, have converted to the Islamic faith since taking part in informational meetings with Muhammad Akkas, who considers himself a missionary of sorts. Akkas thinks of himself as an Islamic "propagator" who knows how to instruct those who express an interest in Islam.

Akkas, a graduate of Waynesburg College in Pennsylvania, was working as a computer programmer at the Aramco oil firm in Saudi Arabia when the Army hired him to educate troops about Islamic culture. Akkas travels by helicopter to military bases in Saudi Arabia where, he says, his lectures are well-received. "All of us are born Moslem," he told Laurence Jolidon, a USA Today journalist in Saudi Arabia. "Some of us have to be reminded of that. . . . If Islam is only presented to people they will see the correctness of it."

CONVERTS ARRESTED: CAIRO, Egypt (EP) — Three Egyptian Christians who are converts from Islam have recently been arrested and imprisoned for leaving the faith to embrace Jesus Christ as their Savior. Mustafa Mohammad Daid al-Sharkawi, 30, and Mohammad Hussein Mohamed Ibrahim Sallam, 25, were arrested by police in the middle of the night Sept. 28 as they slept in the apartment they shared. Just 11 days later, a friend whom the two had led to conversion was also arrested in the middle of the night; 21-year-old Hassan Muhammad Isma'eel Muhammad lived in another city. The Emergency Act of 1978, which is still in effect, allows authorities to arrest and incarcerate anyone without charges and to hold that person indefinitely. The prisoner's name does not appear on a prison roster, so family and friends are often unable to ascertain the whereabouts of the prisoner.

Pastor and vision identified as keys to leaving plateau

By Mark Wingfield
Part 3 of 6

ATLANTA (BP) — Pastoral leadership and vision are the two most important factors in taking a church off a plateau, researchers and pastors of growing churches contend.

One professor explains this by an equation: "Pastoral vision shared with the people and implemented by the two together equals breakthrough," said Ebbie Smith, professor of missions at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Smith and other experts know a renewed vision is essential to moving a church off plateau. What they can't say is where to find that vision or how to sell it to a congregation.

"This is where you get into a very spiritual dimension," Smith said. "This is where all our graphs and percentages fall apart. A pastor has got to demonstrate a concern for the people, and they've got to be convinced that things are going to work."

But charts and graphs do show some things clearly.

For one thing, there is a statistical correlation between the arrival of a new pastor and the time churches begin to grow off a plateau. This was documented in a 1989 study comparing churches which remained on a plateau and churches which grew off a plateau.

The research, done by Kirk Hadaway of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, found that almost half of breakout churches called their current pastor immediately before they began renewed growth. Breakout churches are those that break away from a plateau with a new spurt of growth.

"Apparently a new pastor is often necessary to revitalize a stagnant church, and if a church is going to follow its pastor off a plateau the change usually occurs within the first few years," Hadaway said.

Simply changing pastors is not the key to this finding, however, because another 22 percent of breakout churches had the same pastor during their periods of plateau and significant growth.

The key is the vision the pastor communicates to the congregation. New pastors more frequently bring a new vision which results in growth,

Hadaway said.

But pastors can experience turnaround in their current churches if they are willing, added Jere Allen of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. "There are excellent examples of pastors who have changed their style from business as usual to a determination to be proactive and make a profound difference in the growth pattern of the church."

Such a change in an existing pastorate often comes on the heels of a sabbatical leave, a fresh study of the meaning of the church, or a personal crisis, Allen said.

The success of breakout pastors is not based on preaching ability, seminary education, administrative skills, or an authoritarian leadership style, Hadaway and Allen concluded.

Instead, the ability to convey a vision of what could be is the critical difference. "The pastor who is able to generate enthusiasm is the one most likely to move a church off the plateau," Allen said. "A church needs a clear and simple, biblically based vision toward which all the other dreams lead."

Most often, this is accomplished by leading a church to re-examine its purpose for existence, to ask, "Why are we here?" Allen suggested. "The first thing a church needs to do is be intentional."

This is not accomplished by dusting off the church constitution for a review, he said. Rather, it happens when pastor and lay leaders work together to draft a new mission statement.

The process of creating the statement will prove to be more important than the statement itself, Allen said.

Unfortunately, many pastors are threatened by the prospect of real growth, even though they say they want the church to grow, added Charles Chaney, HMB vice president for extension. When a church begins to grow, the pastor has to let go, which often is threatening, he said.

Likewise, growth can be threatening to laypeople. "It takes a lot of courage to grow," said Joe Finrock, pastor of First Church in Gentry, Ark. "It takes courage to set a goal because

you could fail. Nobody wants to be a failure."

Finrock led his small-town church to grow from a plateau of about 100 in attendance to about 370 in attendance currently.

When he arrived in Gentry, Finrock said he found a church with low morale. "This was my first pastorate, and I didn't know any better, so I told them we could be a great church."

"The thing people run up against in small towns is a small-town mentality, that we're just a small church and we can only do small things," he said. "That's just the lie of the devil."

A similar story is told by Steve Curtis, pastor of Providence Church in rural Franklin, Ky. In eight years the church has grown from an average Sunday School attendance of 54 to 440.

The difference is the church has "changed from being a negative, dying type atmosphere to being one where we believe we can accomplish what God wants us to," Curtis said. "It had something to do with realizing our potential."

"We constantly remind our folks that the best days in the life of the church are never in the past, they're always in the future. You've got to believe God can take a country church or an inner city church and still do something good with it."

The same story is repeated by urban churches. When Dan Yeary arrived at University Church in Coral Gables, Fla., Sunday attendance had dropped from 1,100 to 300.

University Church was not located in a transitional community, was not disrupted by racial issues, but had simply lost sight of its purpose, Yeary explained. "In our situation there was no reason for decline except for loss of vision."

He began his work with that mission. "I believe if the pastor doesn't have a vision, it's going to be difficult for the people to have one."

From that point, there were no secret formulas to success. "We didn't have any magic wands," Yeary claimed. "We just worked hard." As a result that dwindling congregation of 300 now numbers more than 1,300 in attendance.

Wingfield writes for HMB



NASHVILLE — Design of the Dramatics, a drama group from First Church of Columbus, performs at the first National Drama, Puppetry and Clowning Festival held in Nashville in

November. The festival was sponsored by the Sunday School Board's church recreation department. (Photo by Terri Lackey)

Association	Church	Pastor	Total Baptisms
Hinds-Madison	FBC, Jackson	Frank Pollard	172
Hinds-Madison	Colonial Heights		118
Rankin	Park Place	Bobby Williamson	113
Rankin	FBC, Richland	Allen H. Stephens	112
Gulf Coast	Sharon	Donnie Guy	110
Hinds-Madison	Morrison Heights	Ken Alford	95
Northwest	Colonial Hills	Steve Bennett	95
Lauderdale	Northcrest	Malcolm Lewis	82
Lee	Harrisburg	James R. Chatham II	79
Lebanon	Temple, Hattiesburg	Gary Berry	77
Choctaw	Chester	Rob Faulk	75
Washington	FBC, Greenville	Kiely Young	75

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Lebanon	Temple, Hattiesburg	Gary Berry	77
Choctaw	Chester	Rob Faulk	75
Washington	FBC, Greenville	Kiely Young	75

Bolivar	Waxhaw	Pete Newsom	13/13
Simpson	Campbells Creek	Greg Wunningham	10/16
George	Bexley	Larry Havard	100/29
Pike	Meadville Street Mis.	Rico Balzora	8/4
Lafayette	Delay	Jimmy Sockwell	113/32
New Choctaw	Calvary	Thomas Nickey	27/9
Hinds-Madison	Christ Tabernacle	James Anderson	30/17
Gulf Coast	North Hills Mis.	Doyle Sellers	56/13
Benton-Tippah	Dry Creek	Larry Dukes	31/14
Gulf Coast	Sharon	Donnie Guy	389/110
Simpson	Palestine	DeWayne Bradford	181/50
Gulf Coast	Robinson Road	Ray Wuerzer	65/16
Bolivar	Chinese		52/5
Lee	Indian Hills	Troy Alley	99/23
Scott	New Zion	Barry P. Boquet	17/5
Yalobusha	Faith	David Lewis	89/24

By Vicki Heath
Part 1 of 4

Historic exchange brings two Soviet students to MC

By Shannon T. Simpson

Yaroslav (Yarick) Dildaev and Zhanna Nurmukhamedova are Mississippi College's current Cooperative Services International Education Consortium exchange students from the Soviet Union.

Though the exchange is a historical one, as the first between the CSIEC and the Soviet Union, the two seem quite comfortable with their "place in history."

"We are not really THE first, we are just the first in a new wave of people who will come and exchange with the U.S.," says Yarick.

The exchange was made possible through the Foreign Mission Board's CSIEC program, and arranged through the Ministry of Education in the students' home republic of Kazakhstan. Though the students are chosen by the Ministry of Education, MC can exchange with any of 54 institutions of higher learning.

Mississippian Tim Young (son of missionaries to Bangladesh) is MC's American representative. He is enrolled at the Kazakh State University, and now lives with Yarick's parents in the capital city, Alma-Ata. When Yarick heard of Tim's dilemma with the food program in the Kazakh State dorm, he called his parents, who retrieved Tim and brought him to live with them.

The pair were chosen based on their performance in a series of comprehensive exams, in which they competed with other students across Kazakhstan for the opportunity to come to the United States. Yarick and

Zhanna's facility in English was the main criterion for their selection.

At home in Alma-Ata, Yarick, 21, studies political science/pre-law at Kazakh State, and continues to do so at MC. He plans to be president of his republic some day, an ambition about which he is very serious. He says he wishes he could learn more in-depth material about our legal system. He says his studies at MC are hard because of the language difference, but not as challenging as he would like.

Zhanna, 20, is also from Alma-Ata, and studies at the Food Technology Institute. As there is no comparable program at MC, she enrolled in home economics there. She says she finds it very easy, and a little too elementary. Both she and Yarick agree that the Soviet Union surpasses the United States in its understanding and stress on study of the natural sciences.

Asked about their religion, Zhanna claims Muslim (nominally only, she says), the national religion of the Kazakh republic. Yarick, on the other hand, is atheist.

"It doesn't bother me that people here are so free with their religion," he comments. "I am understanding, and they are with me, too."

Surprisingly, both say they do not find life in the United States much different from life in the Soviet Union.

"People here seem to smile more," observes Zhanna. "They seem more light. Soviets are much more serious."

Yarick says the difference he notices is that he feels much older

than his American friends of the same age.

Asked about how the policies of perestroika and glasnost have affected their lives in the Soviet Union, Yarick is quick to respond. He says there has always been enough of everything — food, goods — in his republic, so that any change will come slowly. Change has not stopped, he says, "since the revolution in 1917."

Other adjustments to life in the U.S. were learning how to translate our Southern dialect, and getting used to the individualism of life here, as opposed to the collectivism they grew up knowing. They say our habit of speaking slowly was a definite advantage in overcoming the first obstacle.

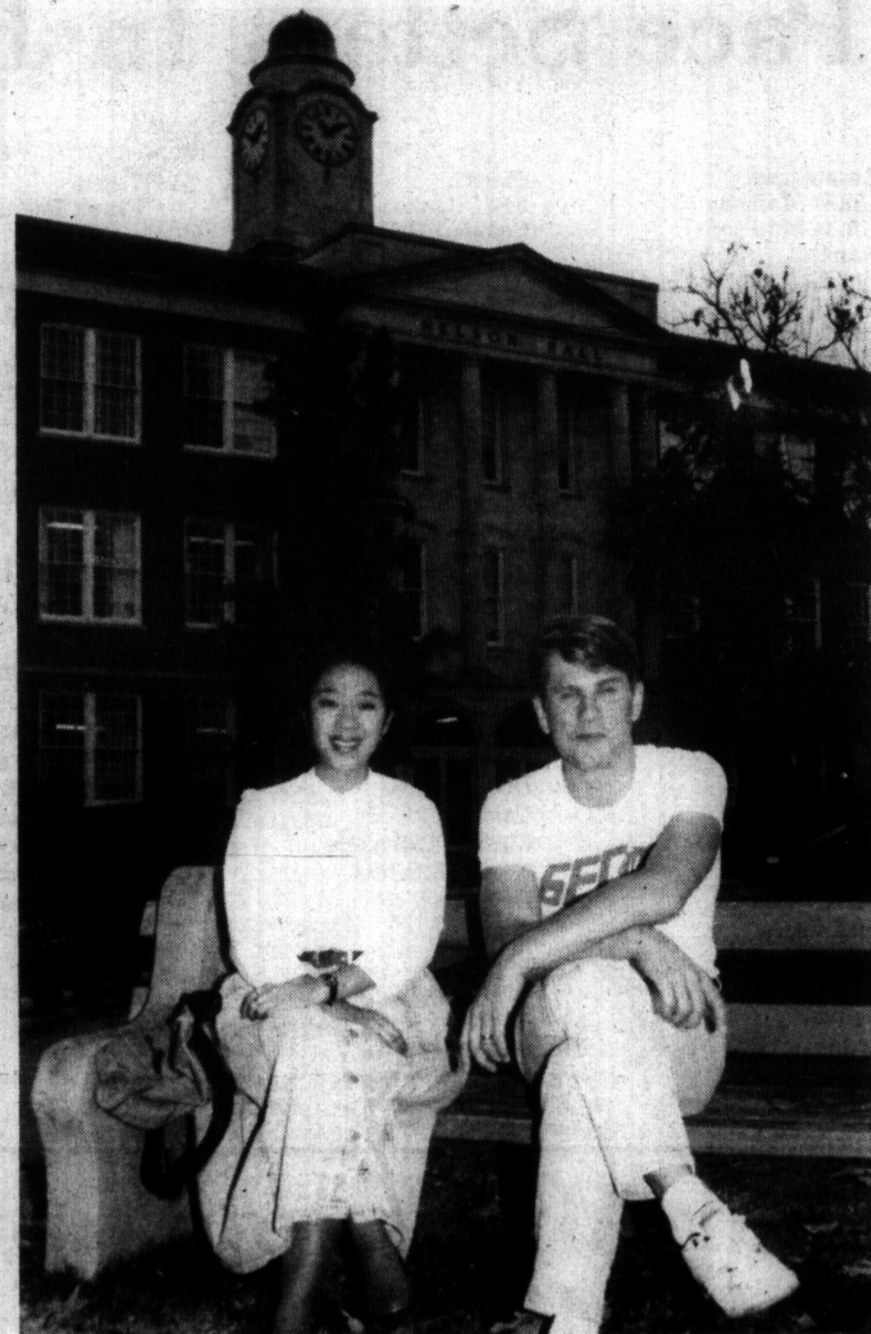
"'Fixing to' was the hardest slang to figure out," says Zhanna. "Most of the others, like 'you all,' were easier. We could guess it from the conversation."

Despite the minor difficulties, the students say they will try to extend their stay beyond the end of the semester, when they are due to return, and another pair will take their places.

"We are only now becoming accustomed to the language," they say, "and it seems a waste to go home so soon."

Zhanna will most likely miss the food. She says her favorite thing about being here is the variety of restaurants.

Simpson is staff writer, BAPTIST RECORD.



Zhanna Nurmukhamedova, left, and Yaroslav (Yarick) Dildaev, right, are the Cooperative Services International Education Consortium's current exchange students from Alma-Ata, capital city of the Kazakhstan republic in the Soviet Union.

Southern Baptists help ease suffering in Soviet republic of Kazakhstan

By Marty Croll

ALMA-ATA, U.S.S.R. (BP) — Three separate environmental calamities in the Soviet republic of Kazakhstan present an open door for Southern Baptists to help people who have long been hidden from the eyes of the West.

Through their service organization, Cooperative Services International, Southern Baptists plan to send up to 700 volunteers to Kazakhstan next summer to provide assistance in many fields. It could be the largest Southern Baptist volunteer group ever to participate in a single overseas project. Southern Baptists also have begun to ship a series of huge containers of food and nutritional supplements to the beleaguered area.

Much of the assistance during the project, scheduled June 20-July 8, 1991, will focus on the heavily Muslim people living along the fringes of the Aral Sea, where over-draining of upstream rivers has caused water to recede from the shoreline. Forty percent of the seabed has turned to salty dust.

Other support will go to an area surrounding a nuclear testing site and to an earthquake-stricken region.

Because the region has long been out of contact with the West, most Kazakhs have never met a Christian.

"How we respond to their needs gives rise to the question, 'Why?' and we can answer them, 'Jesus Christ,'" said John Cheyne, who ad-

ministers Southern Baptists' overseas hunger and disaster relief funds. Cheyne traveled to the area in September at the invitation of the Golden Apple, a group set up to help Kazakhstan by fostering exchanges between the Kazakhs and other cultures.

"How we respond to their needs gives rise to the question, 'Why?' . . . Jesus Christ."

Cattle and sheep — lifeblood to the economy of Kazakh farmers and herders descended from the ancient Turks — still graze on the hillsides near where the Soviet government is believed to have staged atomic tests similar to the ones the United States conducted in the American western deserts.

Disfigured children inhabit the village of Sarzhal, near where underground atomic blasts reportedly were vented into the air. In Sarzhal, a collective farm project with some 35,000 people, Cheyne visited the home of a 40-year-old woman and was told her dwarf-like appearance resulted from radiation exposure.

Kazakh leaders told Cheyne nuclear testing dangers were not evident for some time. They thought other factors caused growing malformation and mental disorders in the region. More recently, however, signs of radiation poisoning such as cancer, leukemia and pulmonary problems have become overwhelming.

The areas also seem to lack adequate medical facilities, Cheyne reported. One of the components in the upcoming Southern Baptist volunteer project calls for 50 health care professionals to work in Kazakhstan. Each will carry a footlocker of medical supplies to donate to the people.

Kazakh officials particularly want radiologists, infectious disease specialists, dentists, prosthetists and nurses. Health volunteers will teach and work in hospitals and go into rural clinics.

Other requests for the volunteer project include 300 university students to make cultural presentations; 100 professionals to give seminars in such subjects as business, communications, management, law, banking, law enforcement, food, education, transportation, art and music; 25 construction workers; 50 people to operate cultural and commercial display booths; and 175 specialists in the performing arts.

Croll writes for FMB.



SCENE OF SUFFERING — Disfigured people inhabit an area of the Soviet republic of Kazakhstan where the Soviet government is believed to have staged, and reportedly vented into the open air, atomic tests similar to ones the United States conducted in the American western deserts. Standing with residents of the region is John Cheyne, right, who directs Southern Baptists' overseas relief program. Leaders in the predominantly Muslim republic have asked Southern Baptists to help them recover from nuclear poisoning and two other environmental calamities. (BP Photo)

Kelly reports on year in Philippines

By Earl Kelly

Sunday morning, Nov. 18, Marjorie and I awoke to a wonderful realization. About three hours up some almost roadless mountains north of us there were a few tiny Baptist churches who were experiencing an historic occasion. For the first time EVER the members would go to church carrying Bibles written in their own Kankanaey tribal language!

On the Saturday before we had sat in the sun with over 3,000 Kankanaey people as the new Bible was ceremonially dedicated. Patient Bible translators had lived among them for 17 years, had listened to them speak, and had put God's word in print for them. Only a few of the 3,000-plus people at the celebration were Christian, but these few now have a wonderful tool with which to evangelize their people.

This experience is just one of many, MANY that have changed our lives during the past year. When we left Jackson, Mississippi, last January to become missionary volunteers to the Philippines, little did we dream of what the Lord would allow us to see and to do.

"When time comes, I want to retire TO something and not FROM something," had been my prayer for a long time! Leaving the Mississippi Baptist Convention leadership role would not be easy, I knew; but never

could I have foreseen the "whip cream on top of the pie" joys that the Lord had in store for us.

Our main assignment was to teach in the Philippine Baptist Seminary in Baguio City (earthquake center last July 16), Luzon. My doctoral degree, many years ago, had been in church history. The Baguio Seminary desperately needed someone on the faculty with that background. Marjorie was asked to teach courses she had taught during her years at William Carey College.

BUT, between seminary terms, we were given another assignment — visit and encourage as many of the South Asian Southern Baptist missionaries as possible. There are over 400! — and they are scattered in many countries. We have only scraped the surface but what experiences we have had in Bangladesh, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia, as well as in the Philippines.

During April and May, we slept in the homes — or ate at the table — of 127 missionaries. Unaccustomed to water beds, we found them in almost every home. "They're cooler and easier to bring to Asia," they said. Getting out of one was a challenge for me. Getting in was no problem. Marjorie just enjoyed both directions! Many an MK (missionary kid) slept

on a floor pallet so that we could use his bed.

During June and July, we participated in the annual mission meetings of all of the countries mentioned above. I led the spiritual emphasis in all but one. What an humbling experience.

Annual mission meeting time is similar to a large family reunion. It is the time of the year when all the missionaries and their children get together to hug, share, give reports, plan, pray, and to eat and laugh a lot! To have been right in the middle of each of these gatherings was a blessing we'll never forget. There was one special moment that spoke loud and clear to us about mission life. During a morning prayer session, the small children were asked to go over to one of their "aunts or uncles," kneel beside them and pray for any needs they may have. It was probably one of the greatest prayer sessions we have ever experienced. Missionary kids are special!

Marjorie's ministry to the women, both with the nationals and the missionaries, has been all over South Asia. In May she was the three-day speaker for the first nationwide WMU convention for the Philippine women. During September, she flew to five countries to join in their annual mis-

sionary women's conference, teaching "Spiritual Gifts." She came home to Baguio City totally exhausted, but extremely blessed.

My teaching load is unusually heavy because there has not been a church history professor for some time, but what a challenge! Communication is sometimes a problem, but English comes fast to the young and the dedicated. It's the Mississippi "version" that seems to puzzle them!

My one-on-one dialog with students is a priceless joy. One recently asked if I would be his "father in the faith?" Another brought his family to say that soon he would graduate and return to Indonesia. Would I please fly down and lead a revival in the church he will pastor? "We have thousands who are just waiting to accept Jesus," he said. Others come just for prayer, for advice. Two Nagaland students came to drink tea and say how much their studies are helping them prepare for ministry in their small country, now a part of India. Three graduate students came to our apartment for their final required written report assignment. They stayed for lunch and for two hours we talked about their nations' individual cultural differences, the struggle with Islam or Hindu religions in their lands, and

their prayers for their people. They were Korean, Burmese, and Filipino.

Preaching opportunities come often — from the seminary chapel services to a small "home church" in a barrio to a Philippine Baptist church just outside the gates of our American Air Base near Manila.

Marjorie and I climbed to the top of a mountain recently to encourage a young 13-year-old Christian who said he had started a Saturday afternoon Bible study for small children. Expecting to see a few, we arrived to find 55 totally unchurched little ones between the ages of 6 and 10. They sang children's hymns, quoted simple Bible verses, acted out Bible stories, and smiled a lot.

Actually, that is what we are doing, smiling a lot. God has blessed us so graciously during this year abroad as volunteers. We cannot recommend it more highly.

For many years, we Baptists who loved the Lord supported missions with our money, our prayers, and our interest. We can NOW do more. We can volunteer to be part of the work on the mission field as short term workers in dozens and dozens of areas.

God bless all of you in Mississippi. We love and appreciate you.

Kelly is retired executive director, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.



Faces and places

by Anne Washburn McWilliams



The Gambrell House

Last week's Baptist Record pictured the Gambrell house with three editors standing in front of it. That house, on College Street between City Cleaners and the sanctuary of First Baptist Church, is one of the oldest houses in Clinton. I understand it was in existence in 1852, but I don't know the date it was built.

Eighty-nine years ago, in 1901, it was moved three-quarters of a block. Before then, it stood where the old sanctuary of First Church is. That is where it was when J.B. Gambrell and his family lived in it, and where it was when the Baptist Record was published in it, 1877-1881.

It was moved to give place to what was known as the President's House, built during the administration of President William Tyndale Lowrey of Mississippi College. The President's House was later divided, to become houses on two other lots, to make way for the church.

In February, 1877, the Baptist Record began publication under Baptist convention ownership with J. B. Gambrell, as editor and M. T. Martin, professor of mathematics at MC, as "proprietor." While pastor of Oxford, Gambrell had been writing for a Tennessee paper, The Baptist, which had a Mississippi Department.

Also in 1877, Gambrell accepted a call to Clinton Church as pastor, so he moved his family into the house where he started the Record. Some reports say type was set in a little building in the back yard; others say Gambrell's boys set type in an attic room. Perhaps both were used at varying times.

One Mississippi College president told Baptist Record readers of the 1880s something of what the paper was costing the editor and his family: "Very few of its readers know how

much the Record is costing Brother Gambrell. He has three boys that ought to be in school every day but they have not been here for more than two years. They are in the Record office setting type. Without their labor Brother Gambrell could not support his family and publish the Record with the present number of subscribers. Sister Gambrell edits the fourth page of the paper. She has not only had the care of a large family but has been compelled to do a large amount of office work — mere drudgery. She has put her strength and health and life into the paper."

Editor Gambrell followed his own wise advice to young writers: "Have something to write about. Avoid big words. Tell what you have in mind, and never mind the flowers." Some day, if I live long enough, I want to write a book about J. B. Gambrell, for he was one of the most colorful characters in Baptist history — or in any history, for that matter. He was pastor at Clinton, 1877-1881, and again, 1888-1890.

He was editor of the Baptist Record

"Kingdom Song" to air on ACTS, December 20

"Kingdom Song," the contemporary and traditional sounds of Christmas, will be presented by the sanctuary choir of First Church, Madison. The

program is scheduled to air on the ACTS Network, Dec. 20 at 10 p.m. and not 11 p.m. as was stated in last week's Baptist Record.

Whoever you are, we need your help — soon!

Re: Commercial driver's license and church buses —

The Mississippi Highway Patrol has announced a new law effective April 1, 1992, that all bus drivers of vehicles seating 15 or more (including the driver) will be required to have a commercial driver's license. This will apply to church buses and vans.

Applicants will need to pass a knowledge test and a skill test and the new license will cost \$70. A professional driver's manual can be obtained for \$1 from the MHP. Drivers are encouraged to obtain more information from their local driver's license office.

George Lee will retire as director of missions

George F. Lee will retire as director of missions, Dec. 31 after having served with Tri-County Baptist Missions for 27 years.

The three counties in the joint program are Lawrence, Marion, and Walthall.

Lee entered the ministry in 1947. Dauphin Way Church in Mobile issued the license

to preach and ordination was provided by Coliseum Place Church, New Orleans.

Originally from Mobile, Lee attended Xavier University of Cincinnati while in military service, attended the University of Alabama two years, and

graduated from Mississippi College in 1949. He received the bachelor of divinity degree in 1953, the master of theology in 1971, and the doctor of ministry in 1977.

Pastorates have included First Church, Mandeville, La., Vernant Park Church, Foley, Ala., and Fayette Church, Fayette. Lee has served on the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, Historical Commission, Christian Action Commission, and numerous committees.

The Tri-County Executive Committee has asked Lee to serve as interim director of missions until a successor is named. Resumes of prospective directors can be sent to the chairman of the committee, Paul E. Smith, pastor of Knoxo Church, Rt. 1, Box 30, Tylertown, MS 39667.



Lee

provided by Coliseum Place Church, New Orleans.

Originally from Mobile, Lee attended Xavier University of Cincinnati while in military service, attended the University of Alabama two years, and

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Parent, marriage, family seminar set for January

Leadership training will be offered, Jan. 11-12, in three areas of family work: Parent Enrichment, Marriage Enrichment, and Family Enrichment.

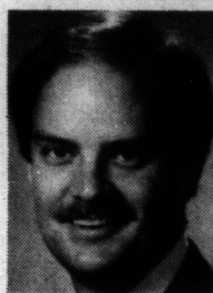
The sessions will take place at the Baptist Building in Jackson from 3 p.m. on Friday to 3 p.m., Saturday.

Jo Hollman of Hinds Community College, will lead the sessions on Parent Enrichment. She will teach leaders to lead a course on Parenting by Grace, a 13-week study in the Lay Institute for Equipping (LIFE) course system. It was developed by the Sunday School Board.

She will also introduce a new self-esteem development course.

The Marriage Enrichment sessions will be led by Ron Mumbower, minister of counseling at First Church, Jackson. He will speak on Covenant Marriage and other models.

G. Ted Taylor, a staffer at First



Mumbower



Taylor



Holman

Church, Starkville, will lead sessions on Family Enrichment. Conference organizer, Clark Hensley of the Convention Board, said Taylor will demonstrate how to develop a strong, significant family enrichment strategy and program for a church.

The workshop registration fee is \$15, which includes two meals and materials. Textbooks are not included in the cost.

Payment of \$15 per person should accompany reservation requests. Write: Manager, Family Ministry Section, Discipleship Training Department, Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. Registration deadline is Jan. 8.

Staff changes

Gwin H. Middleton has resigned Berea Church, Attala Association, effective Dec. 31. After serving this church 10 years, Middleton plans to spend his retirement years doing supply and interim work. He will continue to reside in Kosciusko.

Jack Nazary resigned the Yockanookany Church, Attala Association, to become the interim pastor of Midway Church in Leake Association. This is his home church. He and Mrs. Nazary will reside in their home in the community.

Steve F. Bain is the new pastor at East Heights Church, Tupelo. He was born in Savannah, Tenn. on June 28, 1960. He received his bachelor's degree from University of North Alabama, holds a master's degree in counseling from Memphis State University, and has done additional graduate studies with Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky. He is currently enrolled in the doctor of ministry program at Luther Rice Seminary, Jacksonville, Fla. Bain is a free-lance writer for Baptist Sunday School Board in the areas of church administration and special ministries. He is the former pastor of Lakeview Church, Selmer, Tenn.

James Fleming is the new pastor of Hebron Church in Pontotoc County.

Pine Lake Church, Vancleave (Jackson County), recently called Henry A. (Sonny) Massengale, Jr. as pastor. He is a graduate of Mobile College and received his master of divinity degree at New Orleans Seminary. He is a native of Pascagoula.

First church building opens in E. Guinea

MALABO, Equatorial Guinea — National government leaders and representatives of other faiths watched as Baptists inaugurated their first church building in Equatorial Guinea Nov. 18. Also present were the seven Southern Baptist missionaries who work in the tiny nation, plus retirees Charles and Indy Whitten of Clinton, who completed a 40-year foreign missions career there.

After the service an elderly man looked one missionary in the eye and said, "Africa is hungry for God."

Since Jess and Peggy Thompson arrived in 1981 as the first Southern Baptist missionaries in the country, Baptist work has spread outward from the capital city of Malabo, resulting in two more congregations and five "preaching points."

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Churches adopt expanded annuity

The following churches have adopted the Expanded Annuity Plan since those reported in the November 8 issue of the Baptist Record: Benton-Tippah: Harmony; Lebanon: FBC McLaurin; and Pike: Osyka.

HMB

HOME MISSION BOARD, SBC

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SERIES F

CHURCH LOAN COLLATERALIZED BONDS

Proceeds from the sale of the Bonds, along with other available funds of Home Mission Board, will be used to make direct loans to Baptist churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention for the financing of sites and the construction of buildings in keeping with the Bold Mission Thrust emphasis of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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GROW UP!

From page 2

You cannot say his wonderful name enough. JESUS! JESUS! JESUS! There is a miraculous power unleashed through Jesus Christ that can melt down differences, break down barriers of misunderstanding, reconcile strained spirits, soothe the hurt, and unite us in a mission of total dependence upon Jesus.

Now is the time for a mission-minded, evangelism motivated, Christ-centered, Jesus-proclaiming consciousness to once again become the heartbeat of Mississippi Baptists. Now is the time for Mississippi Baptists to step to the forefront in leading our SBC back on track toward fulfilling the Bold Mission Thrust. Now is the time for pastors to get out from behind their desks, get off the telephone, put down their resolution writing pens and walk the talk of love, unity, forgiveness, evangelism, and missions. Now is the time for pastors, staff workers, convention board workers, and lay people to ask themselves the question, "WHEN DID I LAST LEAD SOMEONE TO JESUS CHRIST?"

Now is the time for pastors to rally their congregations in missions and personal soul winning with the same zeal and enthusiasm as they rally their congregations to go to a convention to elect a president. Now is the time for Mississippi Baptists to lead the way in having a convention where the emphasis is upon worship and praise of Jesus Christ rather than electing officers and adopting resolutions. Now is the time for our Baptist Record to be filled with stories and testimonies of revival, renewal, and reconciliation through Jesus Christ rather than controversy, bitterness, and critical spirit. Now is the time for us to spend as much money, time, energy, and enthusiasm on reaching people for Jesus Christ as we do going to meetings to draw up strategies on how to divide "our church's money!" Just take a moment one week to underline all the times you find the pronouns our or theirs listed in an article dealing with the convention's controversy. Isn't it interesting to see how we've gone from talking about "GOD's money" to "our money"

or "their money."

Now is the time for people to realize that Jesus is not going to be standing at heaven's door ready to give them a big pat on the back for their efforts in "weeding out those moderates, or breaking away from those narrow minded conservatives, or using all their time in defending the Bible, etc." Jesus is going to meet us face to face and ask us the brutally soul piercing questions: "Did you lead anyone to eternal life through my precious blood? Did you feed my sheep? Did your actions cause anyone to stumble? Did you do anything to stop someone from going to hell? Did you tell people every day about me?"

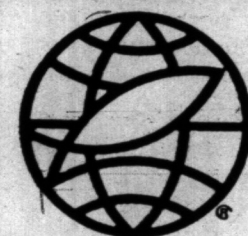
Now is the time to realize there is something spiritually wrong when people begin to be identified as a member of "this group that's in charge or that group that's in charge." What happened to God being in charge? Now is the time for all Baptists to realize that Satan and all the demons of hell are laughing and applauding as we go about verbally abusing and attacking each other. Our enemy is not each other. It's Satan. God looks down on us and cries out . . . SHUT UP. LISTEN UP. Most of all, GROW UP. The fields are white unto harvest. Unfortunately, while we flap our gums, build our tabernacles, and fuel our own selfish egos, the harvest rots in the fields to be eternally lost.

My sincerest, humblest and most earnest prayer is that Mississippi Baptists of integrity, commitment, and love will join hearts and souls in humbling themselves before God in a spirit of revival, reconciliation, and renewal. That once again we get back to our first love of leading people to eternal life through Jesus Christ. That once again we catch the vision of Bold Mission Thrust. That once again we focus our attention upon our wonderful and beautiful Savior Jesus Christ. That once again we live with our actions the same things we say with our words such as love, understanding, patience, forgiveness, cooperation, kindred spirit, and harmony. That once again all Mississippi Baptists can resoundingly sing with joy, love, and harmony of spirit.

Jehu Brabham is the administrator of Parkway Church in Jackson.

Morrison Heights
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Morrison Heights Baptist Church

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January 18-23, 1991

If you would be interested in attending our clinic, we encourage you to contact either of these addresses below:

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Morrison Heights Baptist Church
201 Morrison Drive
Clinton, MS 39056
601-924-5620

Just for the Record

Thursday, December 13, 1990

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 9



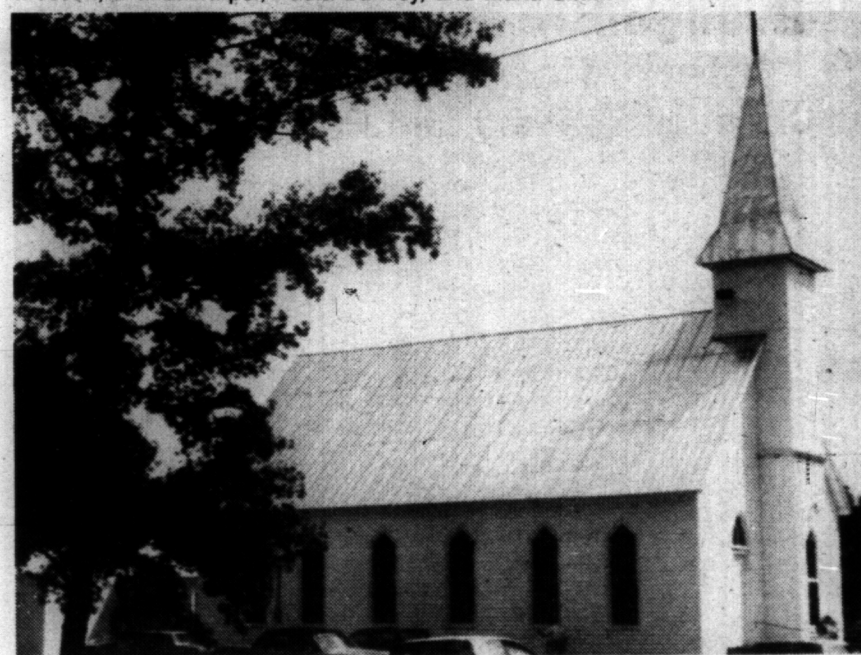
Director of Leake County Brotherhood, Harold Wright, recently organized a mission construction team. The team's first project is to build a new fellowship hall and educational building, New Prospect Church, Carthage. Pictured at ground breaking ceremonies, front row, left to right, are building committee chairman Grady Cobb, Pastor Larry Saxton, chairman of deacons Coyt Sanders, back row, Carthage Brotherhood director Paul Roper, deacon Jerry King, deacon Kermit Morre, deacon Wade Moore, deacon Ronnie Miller, and Harold Wright.



Mt. Gilead Church, Meridian, recently held a recognition service for its GAs. They are, front, Cathy Tate, second row, from left, Erin Barkley, Allison Harper, Jennifer Harper, third row, Cindy Yates, Amy Joyner, Kristin Salkeld, Jennifer McCollum, and Kim Yates. GA leaders are Robin Crouch, back left, and Kathy Joyner.



Mt. Gilead Church, Meridian, recently recognized Acteens of the congregation. They are, from left, Robin Hollingsworth, Joy Lynn Flowers, Michelle Emerick, Nicki Gressett, Brandi Harper, Paula Barkley, and Maria Smith.



Old Silver Creek Church, Lawrence County, dedicated a new fellowship hall Oct. 7. It was the first new structure since the present building was erected around the turn of the century. The hall has four Sunday School rooms, can seat up to 200, and was completed debt-free by the men of the church. Silver Creek Church was established in 1814, and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Max Jones is pastor.



Oak Grove Church, Mendenhall, recently held an Acteen recognition service with the theme, "Following in Jesus' Footprints." Pictured from left are Mandy Wright, Joy Wright, Kim Blair, Sharon Williamson, and Ginny Rainey. A reception followed the recognition service, hosted by the Baptist Women. Brenda Williamson is Acteens leader, William Wright is pastor.

Pilgrim's Rest Church, Ethel (Attala) will present a Christmas program, "From the Manger to the Cross," 6 p.m., Dec. 16. Linda Collins will direct the slide presentation of live scenes. Walter Hines is pastor.



Miller receives scholarship at Clarke College

Clarke College recently awarded John A. Miller with the William Clawson Scholarship, a rotating annual scholarship given by the Board of Ministerial Education, MBC, to a student in one of four Mississippi Baptist colleges.

Miller is the son of Mr. and Mrs. August J. Miller of Collinsville. He is a religion major at Clarke, and is active in BSU, Student Body Association, and Ministerial Association.

Former pastor, Brister, dies

James Harris Brister Jr., of Collins, died Dec. 3 at the age of 78. Born in Kentwood, La., Brister attended Mississippi College, and served as interim pastor for several churches across Mississippi. He was a member of Collins Church at the time of his death.

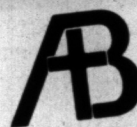
Brister is survived by his wife, Mary Alice, sons James Harris III and David Ernest; daughter Rebecca Bischoff; 11 grandchildren; and two great grandchildren; and one sister.

Services were held Dec. 5, and burial followed at Collins cemetery.

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NEW
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AN OPEN LETTER TO SOUTHERN BAPTISTS



ANNUITY BOARD OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

Dear Fellow Southern Baptists:

In light of the controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention, we want to be sure that all those we serve understand our mission and the spirit in which it is being undertaken. We also wish to reassure any who might be concerned about the status of the Board and the security of their funds.

The staff and trustees of the Annuity Board remain united in our task of serving the best interests of all who participate in our programs. A spirit of cooperation and dedication characterizes our work.

The Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention is the second largest church pension fund in the United States. The growing assets of the Board total over \$2.8 billion, consisting of contributions and earnings managed for the benefit of members and their beneficiaries. The Board has adopted sound investment policies and retains the services of more than two dozen of America's most outstanding professional outside investment managers. Retirement contributions are credited to members' individual accounts in compliance with Internal Revenue Code Section 403(b). Plan members receive regular reports of the performance of the plan funds they have selected.

The mission and spirit of the Annuity Board remain the same. The trustees and staff of the Board are working faithfully to "serve those who serve the Lord."

B. J. Martin
Chairman of the Board

The above letter was
unanimously adopted by the Board of
Trustees at the October 30, 1990 meeting in Dallas, Texas.



Names in the news



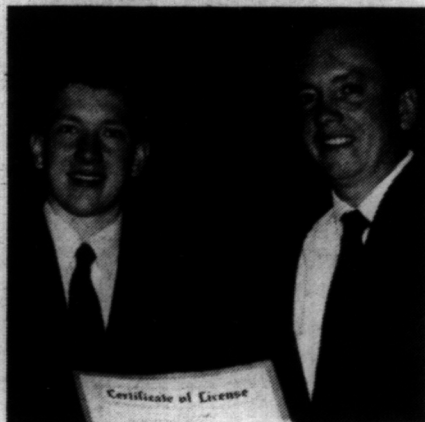
On Nov. 9 **Bobby Butler**, center, was ordained into the ministry by Temple Church, Myrtle, where he serves as youth pastor. Those participating in the ordination, left to right, are Ron Simpson; Griff Walker, pastor; Doug Phillips; and Richard Johnson.



Women of **Pleasant Ridge Church, Woodland, (Chickasaw)** have been quilting for the public, and giving all the money made to missions. They have been quilting for five years and have given approximately \$9,000. Behind the quilt, pictured left to right, are Lorette Herrington, Rosie Dobbs, Louise Dobbs, Ruth Lancaster, Bertha Griffin, Corene Griffin and Pauline Griffin. Quilters not pictured are Rebecca Lancaster, Mary Alice Davis, Mildred Brooks, Lois Hampton, Ola Lancaster, Olene Springer, Thelma Lancaster, Jean Pilgrim, Ethel Lancaster, Ella Mae Dendy, Lavonia Lancaster, Corrine Moore, and Dee Criddle.



Old Oak Grove Church, Myrtle, recently ordained Milton Tucker and Clarence "Skeet" Thomas as deacons. Pictured are Pastor Tommy C. Peters, left, and Thomas.



Eric Smith, left, was recently licensed to the gospel ministry by Cleary Church, Florence, in Rankin Association. Gene Gillis, pastor, Cleary Church, is pictured presenting the Certificate of License to Smith.



Antioch Church, Florence (Simpson) recognized Frank Bennett for 23 years' perfect Sunday School attendance. Alton Sandifer, Sunday School director, left, presents the attendance pin to Bennett. Barry Ward is pastor.

Mack W. Carney from Waynesboro received the master of religious education degree on May 20 at New Orleans Seminary.

Carney, pastor of Hillcrest Church in Lucedale, is married to the former Cheryl Coxwell of Quitman. He is the son of Lester Carney of Laurel. His home church is Evergreen Church in Shubuta. He holds the associate of arts degree from Clarke College and the bachelor of arts degree from Mississippi College.

FILMS

From page 3

trend of national standards reaching the lowest common denominator. Clearly, there are many, many communities across the country for whom such a lowest common denominator, East Coast and West Coast standard is going to be patently offensive, said Richard D. Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"What better way for parents to receive some meaningful guidance on the suitability of films for themselves and their families than to have a rating constructed by their friends and neighbors. I applaud the efforts of those seeking to bring meaningful ratings standards back to the American film industry."

Violators could be punished by a maximum fine of \$500.

The classification board would include 26 citizen volunteers representing the entire community. The recommended ordinance is similar to that of the city of Dallas. Its movie ratings board was established in 1966. The Dallas ordinance has been revised twice to comply with court rulings. It has survived several tests in court.

One of the reasons offered by the motion picture industry and film critics for establishing NC-17 was so that serious films could be distinguished from blatantly pornographic ones. One film, "Blonde Emmanuelle," that has received an NC-17 rating illustrates the flaw in the new rating, according to the Washington Post.

Wives of ministers are invited to overnight retreat, Garaywa

An overnight retreat for ministers' wives, (wives of pastors, staff ministers, and student pastors) planned and promoted by Woman's Missionary Union, is scheduled for Friday night and Saturday morning, Jan. 25 and 26.

Headlining this special weekend will be two women: Judy Edwards, of New Mexico, a home missionary, writes for WMU and the Baptist Sunday School Board. She wrote the book, *HOW TO PRAY FOR MISSIONS*, and is an authority in time management. Myra Marshall, whose minister of music husband was a victim of forced termination, has written a book titled *BEYOND TERMINATION*.

These along with others, will share in general sessions and also will be available for individual conferences.

Cost of the retreat is \$21, which covers three meals and spending the night at Garaywa. It will begin at 5:30

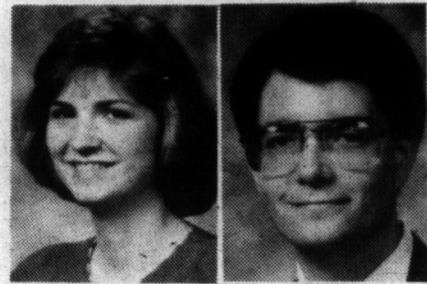
p.m. on Friday and end with lunch on Saturday at 12:30.

To register for the weekend, send name and address, with a check for \$21 made payable to Camp Garaywa. An outline of the weekend program will be mailed to registrants.

Revival results

Cloverdale, Natchez (Adams): Nov. 2-4; youth revival; Lonnie Latham, director of missions, Kingsland, Ark., preaching; Bruce McCall, Cloverdale Church, music; one by letter; Weyland Gauntt, pastor.

To accomplish great things, we must not only act but also dream, not only plan but also believe. — Anatole France



Mr. and Mrs. Carlton

Home Board appoints Jacksonian

ATLANTA — Jackson native, Pamela Carlton, was appointed to mission service by the Home Mission Board, SBC, in November. Mrs. Carlton will serve in family and church ministries along with her husband, David, who will be a church planter apprentice. The Carltons will serve in Davenport, Iowa.

Mrs. Carlton is a graduate of Baylor University. She was formerly an evangelism coordinator and assistant to the college minister in Nacogdoches, Texas.

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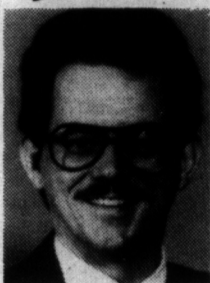
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Do you need an engraved invitation?

By Bob Rogers
Luke 14:12-24

Tony Cartledge tells of a major company that reviewed the reasons its employees gave for being late, and awarded a prize for the best excuse. The winning entry was:



Rogers

"My pig fell in the furnace, and I had to take it apart to get him out." Apparently the man's pig was sick, so he was keeping it indoors, when it fell into an uncovered furnace duct. We've all heard excuses for not accepting Christ or not coming to church. Whether the "ox gets in the ditch" or the pig in the furnace, most excuses are inexcusable. In this Sunday's lesson, Luke 14:12-24, Jesus tells a startling story about excuses made to God's invitation.

Jesus was eating at the home of a Pharisee (vs. 1), when he said to his host that instead of inviting friends or relatives or rich people to dinner, he should invite "the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind" (vss. 12-13). Those with physical handicaps were excluded from the religious community, so these were shocking words. Jesus was not saying that we shouldn't

UNIFORM

have a party with our friends, for he did that himself. He was saying that we need to get out of our comfort zone and extend our relationships to those who have nothing to give in return. As the angel said in announcing Christ's birth, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10).

Jesus went on to tell a parable to illustrate his point. A man planned a "great supper" with a giant guest list, and sent his servant to announce to the invited guests, "Come; for all things are now ready" (vs. 17). This reminds us of God's invitation to accept Christ. Revelation 19:9 says, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

However, the guests backed out of the dinner invitation with increasingly flippant excuses. The first had bought some land, and the second had bought five pairs of oxen, and both politely said, "I pray thee have me excused" (vss. 18-19). They both preferred to inspect their new possessions. The third simply said, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come" (vs. 20). Why would being a newlywed keep him

away? Did he not want to be away from her for any length of time, or was he henpecked and knew she would tell him not to go? This third excuse did not even include the polite phrase "I pray thee."

Whether their reasons sounded valid or not, or whether they were polite or not, didn't matter. The fact was, nobody was coming. In most of Mississippi, we have a church at every major intersection, extending the invitation to accept Christ. Where are the people? So many have refused to hear the gospel, and many others say they are believers; but they have taken their churches for granted, and are nowhere to be found.

When his invitation was rejected, the host angrily sent his servant to gather in "the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind" (vs. 21). Notice that these were the same sort of people that Jesus had mentioned in verse 13. Perhaps Christ had in mind people like those in Tukuyu, Tanzania. You and I may have no idea where Tukuyu is, nor feel it is any more important than the Pharisees thought the poor and handicapped were. Yet Southern Baptist missionaries Jon and Lisa Lord have witnessed 5,455 decisions for Christ there from 1987 to 1989, and Jon has baptized 300 of them himself

in the chilly mountain streams. God is not waiting alone at the table for the people to come to his feast. His Spirit is moving wherever people will respond. Christ warns in verse 24, "For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

When there was still room for more, Jesus said that the host told his servant, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (vs. 23). This verse has been used as a license to coerce and manipulate people into Christianity, if that is possible. The words translated "compel" means to "urge." In the ancient Middle East, it was a courtesy for an invited guest to at first politely refuse to come until he was urged. The host was telling his servant to make the invitation urgent and forceful, just as the Christian is to witness earnestly and not to give up.

Questions to consider:

1. What excuses have you given for not trusting Christ or not serving him? Any excuse will do if you don't want to do something. Do you want to accept Christ's invitation?

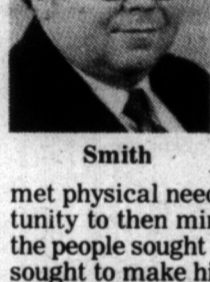
2. As a Christian, are you urging people to trust Christ? When did you last do so? Will you do it this Christmas season?

Rogers is pastor, Calvary Church, Gloucester.

Jesus is our daily Bread of Life — take and eat

By Jim Smith
John 6

We are blessed in the United States to the point that even those we consider to live in poverty rarely go without a variety of food to eat. It is difficult for us to fathom the concept of "our daily bread" being the only nourishment a family might have for a day, two days or maybe only a loaf per week.



Smith

Jesus performed a great miracle recorded in verses 5-13 in the feeding of the multitude of 5,000 men plus the women and children with five small barley loaves and two small fish. He once met physical needs, hoping to have the opportunity to then minister to spiritual needs, but the people sought to make him their king. They sought to make him king because they believed he could continually feed, heal, and clothe them, not because of the miracle they had seen and certainly not because they believed him to be God's Son.

LIFE AND WORK

Jesus instructed those of the multitude who followed him around the lake not to labor for the physical food of this world that perishes or is consumed and passes away, but rather to labor from the spiritual food which endures unto everlasting life. Jesus has the power to give it to whoever shall call upon his name because he is sealed, guaranteed, empowered as the only Son by God the Father.

Seeking to know how they might do the works of God (to work their way into favor) they inquired of Jesus who gave a simple answer "... believe on him whom he hath sent." We understand that in believing we receive salvation, in salvation we have the faith to live within the will of God the Father who sent the Son. They did not grasp this principle of the Christian faith. God does not want us to serve him to obtain salvation, but we are to serve him out of joy because we have received salvation.

Jesus could relate to the people of his day as the "Bread of Life." They often knew what it was like to go without sustenance of daily food.

Jesus moves them again beyond the physical daily needs of the body to the spiritual needs of the soul. Those that ate physical food (manna) from heaven as the children of Israel did in the wilderness must of the physical body die, but whoever eats (takes in spiritually) the bread of God (Jesus Christ) shall not die, but will have everlasting life. Jesus said in verse 51, as a foretelling of his passion, that he would give his physical body (his flesh) so that the world might have spiritual life.

Jesus continued to indicate that he came from heaven. For the Jews any claim to be from heaven was a claim to be connected with God. Any such claim was shocking to them. Additionally, they could not grasp the idea of consuming his flesh or living forever. Jesus meant, of course, that to eat this bread (his body) was to receive him personally into one's life.

The hard saying of Jesus is continued in verses 53-58. Many who did not seek an explanation or could not understand the teaching thought only of cannibalism. It is interesting to know that cannibalism (eating the flesh and drinking the blood) was one of the charges the Romans and others used to condemn the early

Christians and to kill them. The misunderstanding of these verses, coupled with Jesus' statement in verse 62 where he speaks of ascending to heaven to be with God the Father, caused many of his disciples to turn away from following after him.

Jesus knew his true followers before they turned from him. Still others would fall away as the crucifixion approached. Many fall away as times become hard, especially when there is a price to be paid for following. Jesus, no doubt, in sickness of heart experienced by so many shepherds, asks his faithful twelve, "Will ye also go away?"

Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

For once, Peter had answered faithfully and completely for the twelve. I know he answers for me and I hope he answers for you. There is no other means by which men may come to salvation and eternal life but through Jesus Christ.

Amen!

Smith is pastor, Mt. Gilead Church, Meridian.

Teaching about priorities, love for God and fellowman

By Lannie Wilbourn

Luke 10:30-34; 36-42A; 11:42-44

While all of us claim the right to choose our priorities, a working definition of the word is needed. According to *The World Book Dictionary*, a priority is "a preferential position allotted to any project, ... etc., which gives it first claim to the necessary resources."



Wilbourn

When our life is the resource it must be used by right priorities. Jesus took a holistic approach to life in the conversation with the lawyer. Every action of a man comes from the one priority of his life, love for God.

Love for men expresses love for God. It is easier to love "mankind" than to love "a certain man." Each of us can put a name in place of the phrase. Jesus was familiar with this common problem so he told the story of the Good Samaritan. His story begins with a strikingly stark description of the main character of the story, "a man" (10:30 NIV).

Some think this man was a Jew. He represents those people who fall victim to evil and are in need of help. Passers-by saw no signs of social or economic status, only cuts and bruises on a naked body. From Jerusalem to Jericho was 17 miles down, a descent of about

BIBLE BOOK

3,000 feet, through winding mountainous roads. The victim was outnumbered, overpowered, beaten senseless, and left helpless. Many priests and Levites lived in Jericho. It was likely that they were returning home after a week of "duty" in the temple. Levites were assistants to the priests. When the priest avoided involvement with the victim, it was predictable that the assistant would do the same. Preachers, teachers, and deacons should heed this point. If the victim were a Jew, the Samaritan's response was even more unusual. Jesus had encountered this racial animosity in reverse (9:52-56). The Samaritan was not presented as a religious man. He, quite simply, did what needed to be done. Religious rules had lower priority than human need.

Jesus was telling the story in reply to a question a lawyer had asked from a crowd of people. This expert in the law was caught in his own question. The Old Testament was clear, "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Mic. 6:8, NIV). Jesus carefully described the actions of justice, mercy, and humility in the story. Then he told the Jewish lawyer to go and live like the Samaritan in the story!

Bethany was the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Martha was busy preparing food for

about 15 people. It was no small job without a microwave. Her frustration came out as criticism of her sister and Jesus. Not many of us will openly criticize Jesus for not agreeing with our priorities. Martha trusted him enough to be honest. Mary was enjoying the unusual opportunity of listening to Jesus. Rabbis would not teach women. But Jesus welcomed women as disciples. Worship is a higher priority than food since "man cannot live by bread alone." Also, Jesus was capable of using what had been prepared in advance to feed the 15 people. He did it for 5,000.

Jesus broke the Pharisees' ceremonial law of handwashing (11:38) while dining in a home. Jesus used the opportunity to show the foolishness of religion without a real relationship with God.

Religion by rules is always a dangerous course. The Pharisees were meticulous makers and keepers of rules. They intimidated the com-

mon man with their rules. Jesus insulted the Pharisees and compared their brand of defilement of men to their rule of contamination by walking on graves. The laws of God should be kept. The laws of men often are nothing more than religion in its worse form.

Roy Gustafson, writing in *Decision* magazine, said, "Religion is man's quest for God; the gospel is the Savior God seeking lost men. Religion originates on earth; the gospel originated in heaven. Religion is man-made; the gospel is the gift of God. Religion is the story of what a sinful man tries to do for a holy God; the gospel is the story of what a holy God has done for sinful men. Religion is good views; the gospel is good news." A relationship with God through his son Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, is the priority of life. Love for God is shown in loving action for fellow men.

Wilbourn is pastor, Pinelake Church, Brandon.

November CP produces increase for SBC

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program unified budget receipts for November pushed total receipts for the first two months of the 1990-91 budget year to \$23,123,282, a gain of 2.07 percent over the same period of 1989-90.

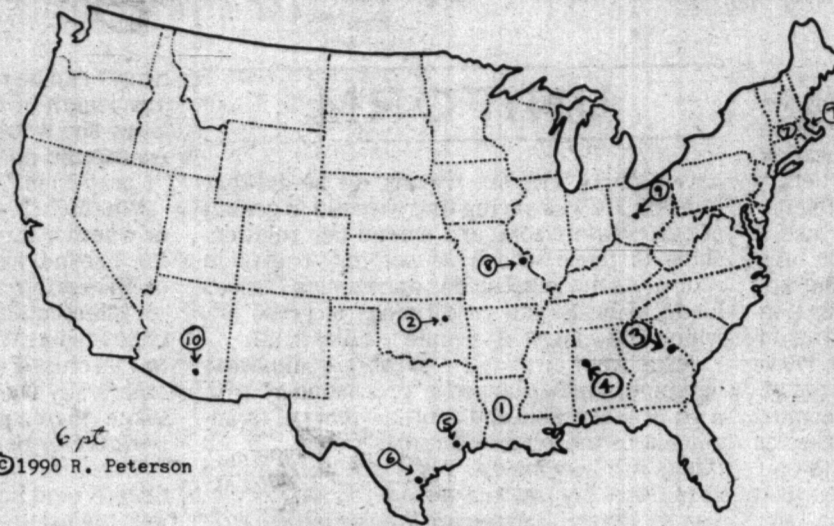
October receipts had fallen 4.20 per-

cent below the same month last year, but an 8.6 percent increase in November produced the growth balance.

The total 1990-91 Cooperative Program basic operating budget of \$137,332,523 requires average monthly receipts of \$11,444,377.

CHILDREN'S PAGE

Pen Pal Club



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By Ralph Peterson

Can you name these states and cities that contain the letters "USA" or "US"?

1. L _____. This southern state is known as the bayou state.
2. T _____. This large city in Oklahoma is a leading petroleum center.
3. A _____. This Georgia city is 160 miles east of Atlanta on the South Carolina border.
4. T _____. This city in Alabama is home to the University of Alabama.
5. H _____. This Texas city is the sixth largest city in the U.S.
6. C _____. This city in southern Texas lies on the Gulf of Mexico.
7. M _____. This state in New England was first settled by the Pilgrims in 1620.
8. S _____. L _____. This large city in Missouri lies on the Mississippi River.
9. C _____. This city is the capital of Ohio.
10. T _____. This city in Arizona is a major health resort.

Can you think of any other cities like this? (How about Azusa, CA, Columbus, GA, Louisville, KY, and Bogalusa, LA?) Look them up in an atlas.

Answers:

1. Louisiana
2. Tulsa, OK
3. Augusta, GA
4. Tuscaloosa, AL
5. Houston, TX
6. Corpus Christi, TX
7. Massachusetts
8. St. Louis, MO
9. Columbus, OH
10. Tucson, AZ



Haughton, LA — Heather Davis, a member of the third grade Sunday School class at Eastwood Church in Haughton, La., is eager to answer a question during large-group time. More Bible stories for children will be one feature of curriculum improvements to be introduced by the Sunday School Board in October 1991. (BSSB photo by Jim Veneman)

Dear Editor,

Hi! My name is Benjamin Grant. I am 5 years old. My birthday is Feb. 15, 1985. My hobbies are swimming, fishing, and riding bikes. I go to Trinity Church. My pastor is Brother Randy Rich. I am in kindergarten. My teachers are Mrs. Wilson and Mrs. Hill. If you would like to write to me, write to:

Benjamin Grant
4900 Clark Rd.
Vicksburg, MS 39180

Dear Pen Pal Club,

Hi! My name is Kris Lee. I am 13 years old, and attend Wess Chapel Baptist Church, where I am involved in mission activities. My birthday is Dec. 3, so actually I am fixing to be 14. I enjoy reading a lot, watching TV, and being with my friends. I would really like to be pen pals with anyone who will write to me. See, my best friend, Melinda Henry, encouraged me to join, because she's in it as well. You may write to me at this address:

Kris Lee
Rt. 5, Box 94
Louisville, MS 39339
Love in Christ,
Kris Lee

Dear Editor:

Hi! My name is Cassidy Lynn Thompson. I am 9 years old. My birthday is February 27, 1981. My hobbies are swimming, skating, and going to the mall. I go to Trinity Church. My pastor is Brother Randy Rich. I go to Bowmar Ave. School. I am in the fourth grade. My teacher is Mrs. Bryant. If you would like to write to me, write to:

Cassidy Lynn Thompson
4900 Clark Rd.
Vicksburg, MS 39180

Hello,

My name is Amy Dettor. I am 11 years old and in the 5th grade. I'm in the GAs and Children's Choir at First Baptist Church, Sardis. I enjoy gymnastics, singing, and riding bikes. I would love to hear from anyone who would like to become friends through the mail.

Your Christian friend,
Amy Dettor
212 Stonewall St.
Sardis, MS 38666

Benoit pastor begins SD support group

By Tim Nicholas

Bobby Walton of Benoit, a speech major in college, had never had a sore throat in his life.

But about 10 years ago the Delta pastor began having trouble communicating. His vocal chords just wouldn't do what he wanted them to do.

Bobby Walton, Baptist pastor of Benoit Union Church, has spastic (or spasmodic) dysphonia (SD), a condition of the vocal chords that causes them to tighten up, rather than relaxing to let air pass through to make sounds.

When it hit him, he noticed he was losing certain vowel sounds and it gradually became worse, giving him a croaky whisper. He would avoid

answering the phone.

Walton, as the other 13,000 or so Americans who have SD, at first thought he had a sore throat that wouldn't go away. Earlier diagnoses were that it was psychological. Walton says that current diagnoses suggest it is caused by a scar on the brain or from Hong Kong flu.

He has had surgery to sever a nerve to relax his vocal chords, and later had a teflon injection to increase his volume.

Walton can still preach; in fact, he says his voice is at its best when he is preaching. It's worse when meeting strangers — which indicates the stress involved. "When I retire at night, I'm worn out," he says.

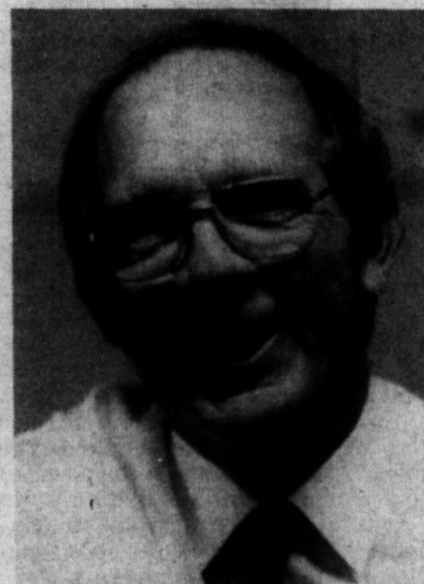
It's a tough thing for a person who depends on oral communication as does a preacher. Walton lost one pastorate over the disease. And 10 years ago, while Walton was without a job, Odie Henderson, director of missions for Bolivar Association, phoned Walton to see if he were interested in the Benoit pastorate. He shares the pulpit with Methodist and Presbyterian pastors, preaching on fourth and fifth Sundays of the month. He also does a midweek service and Sunday night Bible study every week.

"A lot of people can't accept people with handicaps," he says. "That's what I appreciate about these people (at Benoit). They have accepted me with a handicap."

Walton has also found chances to participate outside the church. He just came off a term on the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. He was associational moderator, and has been president of the local pastors' conference. Encouragement also comes from churches which invite him to supply on Sundays when he's not preaching at Benoit.

Walton, who participates in a ministers' support group in the area, has begun reaching out to others who have SD.

He's established a support group for other SD sufferers in Mississippi. And he's currently communicating with 36 people and he produces a newsletter for the group. Walton's wife, Virginia, another "great source of support," he



Bobby Walton

says, types each newsletter.

"Every week I receive letters from people who got my name," he says. "Most have never talked with or met anyone who has the problem."

In January, Walton is planning a statewide meeting in Jackson for fellow SD victims.

"I force myself to do a lot of things. It would be easy to call it quits," he says. "But there's something that keeps me going. The biggest thing is acceptance and encouragement from my family and church."

Nicholas is director of office of communication MBCB.

MK wins first place in high jump national competition in Chile

Jeremy Racey, 14-year-old son of Mike and Annette Racey (Southern Baptist missionaries in Temuco, Chile) won first place in the high jump event in the Chile national track competition held in Vina del Mar, Chile, in October.

He was awarded two "gold medals" — one for winning the event with his jump of 1 meter, 81 cms, and a second for achieving the highest technical mark in the national competition.

He was recognized by the city of Temuco for having tied both the national record and the South American record for his age level.

Jeremy's grandparents, Walter and Irma Racey and Clyde and Margaret Evans, are residents of Biloxi. His parents are on furlough in Biloxi, (2415 Carter Road) from now until March 2, 1991.

During the past six years, Jeremy has lived with his parents one year in Costa Rica and five years in Chile. He attends a Chilean school, where he studies in Spanish, and is active in all sports.

Baptist Record

005-DTM 291
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December 13, 1990

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